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Macedonian National Movement in the 19th Century: Development Stages and Conceptions

1. Introduction

The subject of our article is to make a general retrospect of the historical processes that determined the Macedonian national movement in the period of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. On one hand it includes presenting the conditions in the period up until 1878, and on the other hand the events that took place after the Congress of Berlin, when new borders were drawn and new states appeared in the Balkans. Our goal is to present the specific characteristics of the Macedonian national movement in the different stages of its development.

The beginning of the 19th century was characterised by the social changes in the Ottoman State, the geopolitical strategies of the European forces, as well as the socio-economical internal movements. The reforms, especially those from the period of the Tanzimat (1839 – 1876), contributed to the reformation of the Empire from a feudal-theocratic state to a civil-secular one. The democratic, liberal and nationalistic ideas started to penetrate the Balkans from the West towards the end of the 18th century; the members of the still small, though growing, middle class and the new intelligentsia of the peoples of the Balkans felt alienated from the Ottoman status quo.[3] As a result of this, the process of fragmentation of the Millet-system began.[4]

At the beginning of the said period, a migration of the Macedonian population to the cities where previously the Ottoman, that is to say the Muslim, population was the predominant one, also began. In the new urban environment, this population started to deal in trading and craftsmanship, building business relationships not only within the Ottoman Empire, but also with the more prominent cities of Western Europe. Thus, the process of the formation of Macedonian citizenry started. As it strengthened, it demanded that education and religious services be conducted in the Macedonian folk language.

2. Strivings for Education in the Folk Language

The presence of printed books in Macedonia was mostly connected with the production in the folk language, in its most general sense. Thus,

the first Macedonian printed books appeared due to those Macedonian merchants, craftsmen and intellectuals who were acquainted with the cultural-educational conditions within the neighbouring Balkan states.[5] They started publishing books and periodicals in Macedonian folk language using their own funds.[6] As regards the language in which these publications were written, how it was referred to has been discussed a number of times in the scientific literature. But, "*the differentiation of national names, and so the names of the Slavonic languages on the Balkans as well, was a continuing and gradually developing process and a mix of names could be found with all peoples of the Balkans*".[7]

What is of essence is firstly that it is a *"simple"* language,[8] comprehensible to the ordinary people. Therefore, the books written in Macedonian folk language were intended for those readers who needed them because they were comprehensible for them, as opposed to some other books which were available but incomprehensible, or not comprehensible enough, and so they could not fulfil their basic function – satisfying the needs and requirements of the consumers, i.e. those of the financiers of these publications. Hence, the opposition 'one's own and comprehensible' VS 'alien, imposed and incomprehensible' necessarily arises. Of course, we are not attempting to determine the literature created in this period and the language in which it was written as being national in the modern sense of the word, but rather as being regional. But that opposition in essence determines the cultural-educational, the language, as well as the national progress of Macedonian people starting from the 1840s onwards. In other words, to paraphrase Anderson, it shows the capacity of the Macedonian language

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[5] Particularly Austria, Serbia and Greece.

[6] М. Георгиевски, *Културно-просветната и политичката улога на библиотекарството во Вардарска Македонија во периодот меѓу двете светски војни,* Култура, Скопје, 1989 (M. Georgievski, *The Cultural-Educational and the Political Role of the Librarianship in Vardar Macedonia in the Period between the Two World Wars*, Kultura, Skopje, 1989), p. 30-31. That way, what Benedict Anderson calls *the print-language* was created in the Macedonian environment, too. See: Б. Андерсон, Замислени заедници: размислувања за потеклото и ширењето на национализмот (ревидирано издание), Култура, Скопје, 1998 (Macedonian translation from: B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Edition, Verso, London, New York, 1991), p. 191.

[7] Б. Ристовски, *Историја на македонската нација,* Мисла, Скопје, 1999 (B. Ristovski, *History of the Macedonian Nation*, Misla, Skopje, 1999), p. 19.

[8] This, first and foremost, refers to the books by the first writers in Macedonian folk language – Joakim Krchovski and Kiril Pejchinovich, who were active at the beginning of the 19th century, and all throughout the first half of the said century. This syntagma, on the other hand, is used by Teodosij Sinaitski in whose print shop the popular work by Pejchinovich *Утешение грешним* (*Solace for Sinners*) was printed. Teodosij's print shop in Solun was active in the period from 1837-38 to about 1841-44, and works written in Macedonian folk language were printed there.

to produce an imagined community, i.e. to build a distinct solidarity,[9] or more specifically – to create solidarity based on *one's own* language.[10]

Macedonian teachers, faced with the every day difficulties of using first Greek, then Serbian and Bulgarian primers when teaching, which were largely incomprehensible to the Macedonian children, decided to use textbooks comprehensible to the children, written by Macedonian authors of textbooks such as Partenij Zografski, Dimitar Makedonski, Kuzman Shapkarev, Gjorgija Pulevski, and others. In that respect, the teacher Nikola Pop Filipov, in his letter published in the newspaper *"Macedonia"*[11] on the 6th April 1868, says: *"The textbooks translated into the Bulgarian called (Balkan) language were thus far just a little more comprehensible for us Macedonians than those in the Church Slavonic language: that is why we had had such a little benefit from them."*[12] The production of these teaching aids was dictated by the practical requirements themselves. The efforts made by the Macedonian authors of textbooks were, as K. Shapkarev so vividly explains it, to nurse the little ones with domestic milk instead of the hard and distant food.

The uselessness of foreign books in teaching would encourage Macedonian teachers to ask for help in printing their own grammar books, primers and the like, in one of the Macedonian dialects because they had already tried to write and use such handbooks and they proved to be applicable and acceptable in teaching. Most of these books were, in essence, written on the basis of a choice for a general language standard. The ideological creator of the concept for a common language for Macedonians and Bulgarians was the learned philologist Father Partenij Zografski, and there were a number of people who shared his opinion, i.e. people who advocated same ideas and concepts. There is another segment to this entire process, however. Not only was there an idea, and a theoretical explanation, regarding the *one's own* as a standard, the character of which was beyond any dialects, but it was also applied in practice. Thus P. Zografski presented the idea that the Western-Macedonian dialect be the basis for the common language of Macedonians and Bulgarians,[13] and he also wrote in that dialect which

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[9] Б. Андерсон, *Замислени заедници (Imagined Communities)*, p. 190.

[10] At the same time, in our opinion, the linguistic homogeneity of the territory that M. Hroch refers to (in: *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: a comparative analysis,* Cambridge University Press, 1985, Cambridge, p. 164-165) does not play a crucial role in the Macedonian case, though this issue requires further analysis.

[11] The newspaper *Македония* (*Macedonia*) was edited by the Bulgarian Petko Rachov Slaveykov, and it was published from 1866 to 1872.

[12] Т. Стаматоски, *Никола Поп Филипов, ран претходник на Мисирков* (Т. Stamatoski, *Nikola Pop Filipov, the Early Predecessor of Misirkov*), in: Т. Стаматоски, *Македонскиот јазичен идентитет*, Култура, Скопје, 2004 (Т. Stamatoski, *Macedonian Language Identity*, Kultura, Skopje, 2004), pp. 40-50 (p. 46-47).

[13] Partenij Zografski in his article from 1858 published in the magazine *Български книжници* (*Bulgarian Books*), I, 1, makes an attempt to systematize the differences between the Bulgarian and Macedonian dialects. More on this, as well as on the linguistic knowledge of P. Zografski, see: Б. Конески, *Партениј Зографски како граматичар* (B. Koneski, *Partenij Zografski as a*

basically consisted of his native Galichnik dialect that contained some elements from the wider Macedonian language area.[14] An indication of these ideas is contained in the text by K. Shapkarev, one of the followers of P. Zografski's concept, in the preface to his spelling-book[15] from 1868, who determined the language he had used as being – *"Western-Macedonian, mixed with today's written Bulgarian dialect"*.[16]

The nineteenth century, as a period marked by Romanticism ideas, directs the interest of the scholars of Europe towards the folk works, and specifically the interest of the linguists towards the study of folk dialects as true expressions of the living, active language. Those ideas in Macedonia also mean an intensified collecting of folk works,[17] initial lexicographical attempts, etc., made by local activists (besides the foreign researchers). As Anderson points out, the persistent activities of these professional intellectuals were of key significance for the shaping of European nationalisms in the nineteenth century.[18] However, in the case of the Macedonian activists, the determinant *professional*, and even *intellectuals*, cannot be generally accepted.

Grammarian), in: Б. Конески, *Македонскиот XIX век. Јазично и книжевно-историски прилози*, Култура, Скопје, 1986 (B. Koneski, *The Macedonian 19ᵗʰ Century. Linguistic and Literary-Historical Articles*, Kultura, Скопје, 1986, pp. 101-110.

[14] Later on, a number of such attempts to establish a norm in both the choice of graphemes and the choice of other language characteristics, which often have an occasional character, appear in order to present a specific material in Macedonian folk language. More on this, see: Л. Гушевска, Македонскиот идентитет и јазикот (L. Gushevska, Macedonian Identity and Language), *меѓународен научен собир „Македонскиот идентитет низ историјата"*, Институт за национална историја, Скопје, 2010 *(International scientific conference "Macedonian Identity throughout the History"*, Institute of National History, Skopje, 2010), pp. 345-351.

[15] *Гол'ма Българска Читанка*, Цареградъ, 1868. Quoted from: Б. Конески, *Кузман Шапкарев и другите следбеници на Партенија Зографски* (B. Koneski, *Kuzman Shapkarev and Other Followers of Partenij Zografski*), in: Б. Конески, *Кон македонската преродба. Македонските учебници од 19 век* (второ издание)*, Институт за национална историја, Скопје, 1959 (B. Koneski, *For the Macedonian Revival Movement. Macedonian Textbooks from the 19ᵗʰ Century* (second edition), Institute of National History, Skopje, 1959), pp. 44-86 (p. 51).

[16] Б. Конески, *Кузман Шапкарев и другите следбеници на Партенија Зографски* (B. Koneski, *Kuzman Shapkarev and Other Followers of Partenij Zografski*), p. 52.

[17] The abundant oral folk works were an inspiration and grounds for the diligent collecting activity undertaken by the brothers Miladinovci (their major work *Collection* was published in 1861), K. Shapkarev, D. V. Makedonski, G. and K. Drzilovich, G. Pulevski, M. Cepenkov and others; in other words, as Konstantin Miladinov noted, it was *"an indication of the degree of intellectual development of the people and a mirror of its life"* (*Зборник Миладиновци (1861–1961)*, Кочо Рацин, Скопје, 1962 (*Miladinovci Collection (1861-1961)*, Kocho Racin, Skopje, 1962), p. 10. This folk tradition had its reflection in the poetic works of Konstantin Miladinov, written towards the end of the 1850s.

[18] Б. Андерсон, *Замислени заедници* (B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*), p. 106.

Regarding this, it is important to also mention the circumstances as far as the field of religion, because the first attempts "*to liberate the Christians of the Balkans maintain their sense of belonging to a unity of the religion and the common cause – the liberation. The ethnic identification was secondary in relation to the aforementioned. That is why people from different ethnic groups participated in the uprising movements.*"[19] The interreligious solidarity, specifically in Macedonia, was shaken by the appearance of foreign propagandas which were most prominent in the church-educational sphere. Chronologically, the oldest propaganda was the Greek one[20] which had been present since the second half of the 18th century, and was spread by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (Istanbul). The Patriarchate had created a wide front for spreading Hellenisation, engaging first and foremost Greek priests and teachers, and later cartographers, statisticians, diplomatic representatives, etc., and opening schools in the cities in southern and south-western Macedonia. As opposed to the later period when different schools were opened, including Patriarchate high schools and a seminary, these schools did not look, in the beginning, like educational institutions at all, nor did they have qualified staff employed there. One can find a number of accounts to this in the *Autobiography* by Grigor Prlichev, an activist in the Macedonian Revival Movement,[21] who started his education in Greek language in the second half of the 1830s.[22] Generally speaking, Prlichev's *Autobiography* offers interesting and important material on the activities and the extent of the Greek propaganda, which in some Macedonian cities such as the Slavonic

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[19] С. Влахов-Мицов, Филозофскиот клуч за македонскиот идентитет, Матица македонска, Скопје, 2007, p. 106

[20] Followed by the Bulgarian, Serbian, and later even the Romanian, and as for the religious ones there were the Roman Catholic, the Protestant, etc.

[21] We are using the formulation *an activist in the Macedonian Revival Movement* having in mind the crucial role that Grigor Prlichev had in the fight against the Hellenisation in his birth town Ohrid in south-western Macedonia, where it was, as we previously state, the most prominent. There are different interpretations and formulations regarding the revival and the literary-cultural activities of Prlichev. For example, M. Kouba, basing his analysis on the said Prlichev's activities seen in the Balkan context as well as partly on R. Detrez's understanding, uses the formulation *a revival activist who originates from Macedonia* as a more neutral one (see: М. Коуба, *Григор Прличев на книжевната карта на Балканот* (M. Kouba, *Grigor Prlichev on the Literary Map of the Balkans*)), in: *XXXVII научна конференција на XLIII меѓународен семинар за македонски јазик, литература и култура. Литература*, Универзитет „Св. Кирил и Методиј", Скопје, 2011 (*37th Scientific Conference of the 43rd International Seminar on Macedonian Language, Literature and Culture. Literature.* University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius", Skopje, 2011) pp. 45-66 (p. 52); Р. Детрез, *Канонизация чрез съперничество: Случаят Григор Пърличев* (R. Detrez, Canonization through Rivalry: The Case of Grigor Prlichev), in: *Литературна мисъл,* год. L, бр. 1/2007, Институт за литература при БАН, София 2007 (*Literary Thought*, year L, No. 1/2007, Institute of Literature, a department of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia 2007), pp. 61-101.

[22] Григор Прличев, Автобиографија (превод: Тодор Димитровски) (Grigor Prlichev, Autobiography (translated by: Todor Dimitrovski)), in: Григор Прличев, Избор, Мисла, Скопје, 1991 (Grigor Prlichev, Selection, Misla, Skopje, 1991), p. 40-44, etc.

spiritual centre Ohrid, resulted in total suppression of the Slavonic script in both the education and the religious service. At the same time, the author describes the fight for "*rooting out the philhellenism*", as he puts it in his *Autobiography,[23]* led by none other than himself. One of the methods used by the exponents of the Greek propaganda was falsely accusing prominent fighters against Hellenism and reporting them to the Ottoman authorities for being insurgents or spies. Prlichev too could not avoid that destiny, and he, falsely accused by the Greek Metropolitan in Ohrid – Meletius, spent several months in prison and was released thanks to the lobbying and the finances gathered by a number of prominent people of Ohrid.[24]

3. Cultural Revival / Cultural Agitation Period[25] (1850s – 1870s)

The organised direct opposing of the Macedonian citizenry against Hellenisation began in the 1850s. The Macedonian people led their persistent fight for emancipation from the Patriarchate of Constantinople and Hellenism alongside the Bulgarian people who shared a similar fate in the Ottoman State. The joint activities which were "*under the name of a general Bulgarian cause*"[26] were motivated by the general problems and interests, "*the closeness of the languages and the common Slavic traditions*".[27] But right there, in that fight, which as its final goal had the creation of a single Orthodox Slavic Church (as an opponent of the Patriarchate, in effect the Greek) as a condition for the realisation of the rights in the Ottoman State, was where the differences in the historical development of the two Slavic subjects found their expression. The economically stronger Bulgarian citizenry and intelligentsia, through their own church-educational and social institutions and mechanisms (churches, municipalities, schools, societies, books, and magazines) tried to ensure domination and uniformity regarding the fight, in other words its own Bulgarian colouring. At the beginning of that fight of the Macedonian citizenry, a series of actions expressed the Slavic

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[23] Ibid., p. 128.

[24] In this battle fought by Prlichev, his speeches played a major role, as well as the well known poem about abolishing the Ohrid Archbishopric – *Year of 1762*. Thus, in the famous speech he gave in 1867, he reproaches his fellow citizens: "*How are we to quench this thirst of ours? How are we to understand the holy writ? How is it that we cannot understand that with the Hellenic language there can be no progress for us! How is it that we cannot understand that the Hellenic language is the most cumbersome of them all and that it needs to be studied for 20 years! (...)Isn't it blindness as great as it can be to listen to your children sing in Greek, and neither them nor you to understand! How shall you account for it before our Lord, you who have blinded your own children with a language alien, dead and most cumbersome?*" Григор Прличев, Собрани текстови. Приредил Тодор Димитровски, Скопје, 1974 (Grigor Prlichev, Collected Texts. Compiled by Todor Dimitrovski, Skopje, 1974), p. 114-115.

[25] Analogous to Hroch's *national agitation*, it is more appropriate to use the syntagma *cultural agitation* for the Macedonian case, at least as far as the said period is concerned.

[26] Б. Конески, Кон македонската преродба (B. Koneski, For the Macedonian Revival Movement), p. 40.

[27] Ibid., p. 12.

awakening, which was also influenced by Russia.[28] Russia's ambitions towards the peninsula were accompanied by a pan-Slavic propaganda, according to which the enslaved Christians, with the exception of the Greeks, are Slavic. Stefan Micov points out that those political speculations present a blow to the feeling of Balkan association and thus, being the opponent of Pan-Slavism, the Pan-Hellenism definitely destabilizes that association.[29]

     The basic purpose of the actions of a part of the Macedonian citizenry against the Hellenisation was to suppress the Greek language from the schools in Macedonia and to substitute it with "*the living folk language*"[30] – the Macedonian folk language, to introduce the Church Slavonic language in the religious services, and priests of indigenous origin to hold the services. This was the essence of Dimitar Miladinov's mobilising efforts for a cultural revival of the Macedonian people.[31] Considering the specifics of the Ottoman Empire, where there is dualism in the public authorities – political and spiritual ones – these efforts and agitation are, first and foremost, directed towards the spiritual authorities, at that moment expressed through the Patriarchate and its relation to the Orthodox Christian population. Therefor, we connect the term *cultural revival* with D. Miladinov's activities which trigger noticeable movements in the social, cultural and educational areas, as well as in the church area in the Macedonian micro-world, and in that context the establishing of the opposition *ours* VS *foreign, imposed*.[32]

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[28] The Slavonic–revival phase was also present in the evolution of the Bulgarian national revival movement. The Russian promoting of Pan-Slavism and Slavophilism were in accordance with the politics of gaining access to the eastern Mediterranean region via the territory of the Ottoman Empire. Hence, the integrity of the Orthodox religion under the leadership of the Patriarchate was the safest way to the full Russian influence on the Balkans.

[29] С. Влахов-Мицов, *Филозофскиот клуч* (S. Vlahov-Micov, *The Philosophical Key*), p. 107.

[30] Райко Жинзифов, *Публицистика*, т. I, Съставили Ц. Унджиева и Д. Леков, Издателство на Българската академия на науките, София, 1964 (Rajko Zhinzifov, *Socio-Political Comments*, volume 1, Compiled by C. Undzieva and D. Lekov, Published by the Bulgarian Academy of Scienses, Sofia, 1964), p. 46.

[31] Most authors often do not define the term revival correctly, while others set it in a wide chronological framework, for example B. Ristovski places the cultural revival in the period 1814 – 1870, and determines the end year of the revival movement in general to be 1944. See.: Б. Ристовски, *Што е тоа македонска преродба? Кон периодизацијата на македонскиот национален развиток* (B. Ristovski, *What is Macedonian Revival Movement? For the Periodisation of the Macedonian National Development*), in: Б. Ристовски, *Прилози за развитокот на македонската културно-национална мисла*, Мисла, Скопје, 1983 (B. Ristovski, *Articles on the Development of the Macedonian Cultural and National Thought*, Misla, Skopje, 1983), pp. 163-187 (p. 174).

[32] In that respect, the activities of the first writers who basically wrote in the folk language – Krchovski and Pejchinovich, mark the phase when, according to B. Koneski, a change in the basis of the written language comes about which is in the spirit of the enlightenment ideas and tendencies. See: Б. Конески, *Македонскиот писмен јазик во XIX век* (B. Koneski, *Macedonian Written Language in the 19th Century*), in: Б. Конески, *Македонскиот XIX век* (B. Koneski, *The Macedonian 19th Century*), pp. 21-24 (p. 22).

For example, in 1859, the Russian diplomatic representative Aleksandar V. Rachinski, a contemporary and an expert well acquainted with the national revival movement of the Macedonian people at the time, commented on this one with the following words: *"The movement is spreading throughout the region* (of Kukush[33], our note) *to the most remote places in Macedonia... the inhabitants of Karadak, Poljanin,[34] Voden,[35] Strumica are convinced in the sweetness of the mother's milk – the native language literacy."*[36]

This indicates that one of the most important distinguishing marks of the cultural revival, by our opinion, is the fact that small groups of committed patriots successfully generated mass support. An impressive example of the realization of cultural-folk autonomy was the attempt (1859) of the city of Kukush citizens and their eminent fellow citizen Nako S. Stanishev to move into union with the Roman Catholic church, and with it there was the requirement that a single "archbishopric" be established in Macedonia that would be directly under the authority of the Pope.[37] This act of self-initiative of the citizens of Kukush for emancipation from the Patriarchate and the Hellenisation, was softened by the intervention of the Russian political circles, the Patriarchate and the Bulgarian leaders in Constantinople. The requests made by the people of Kukush were met: for the first time a Bishop of Macedonian origin was at the head of a Eparchy on Macedonian theritory (the Poljan region Eparchy) within the Patriarchate – it was Partenij Zografski.

This historical episode of the people of Kukush was only a fragmental Russian support, which came only when Russian interests were being threatened – its influence on the Balkans and on the Middle East.

The source materials confirm that since 1860 Russia has been attempting to "*transform the characteristic 'Bulgarians' from a political construction into an ethnonym, i.e. it saw no difference between the inhabitants of Bulgaria and Macedonia*".[38] The Russian support was also particularly important for the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate (1870) as another Christian Orthodox religious institution in the Ottoman society.[39] But, it is particulary in the context of this 'Slavonic' religious institution that the aspirations of the Macedonian and of the Bulgarian

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[33] Today's Kilkis, a town in northern Greece.

[34] An old name for today's Dojran, a town in south-eastern Macedonia.

[35] Today's Edessa, a town in northern Greece.

[36] *Руски документи за Македонија и македонското прашање (1859-1918)*, избор, редакција и коментари Александар Трајановски, Државен архив на Република Македонија, Скопје, 2004, док. 1 (*Russian Documents on Macedonia and the Macedonian Issue (1859-1918)*, selection, redaction and commentary by Aleksandar Trajanovski, State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 2004, doc. No. 1), p. 71-72.

[37] This involved appointing local priests, religious services in Slavic language, without making any changes in the Orthodox dogmas.

[38] С. Влахов-Мицов, *Филозофскиот клуч за македонскиот идентитет* (S. Vlahov-Micov, *The Philosophical Key to the Macedonian Identity*), p. 107.

[39] With the founding document there were 16 eparchies under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate, of which two were from Serbia – the Nish and the Pirot eparchies, and one was from Macedonia – the Veles eparchy.

ethnicity come to the fore as separate. And so, just four months after the decree of the Sultan for the establishment of a Bulgarian Exarchate, there was an article published in the newspaper *Macedonia* [40] that was issued in Constantinople, with a title *One Voice for Whole of Macedonia*. With a subtle ethno distinction, the Macedonian solidarity in the anti-Patriarchate fight was pointed out and an appropriate status for the Macedonian ethnic community in the organization and the building of the new church (the Exarchate) was also demanded. Since that institution, established with a document issued by the secular ruler – the Sultan, was not given "*exclusively for the Bulgarians, but the same was promised for the Macedonians through Article 10... if all or two thirds of them so wish, they will be able to join the Bulgarian church*".[41] But the realisation of this opportunity was, in the article, conditioned by the promotion of the democratic principle (respecting the distinctive characteristics) in the inter-religious relation between the Macedonian and the Bulgarian ethnic community. Hence, the referendum of the Macedonian eparchies after the creation of the Exarchate was, in fact, a voice for the emancipation from Hellenism, and not a plebiscite for the benefit of the Bulgarian cause.

According to the decisions reached at the Congress of Berlin, Macedonia, which within the Ottoman Empire appears under the names of the three vilayets (provinces) – the vilayet of Solun,[42] of Bitola, and of Skopje, remained under the full military-political sovereignty of the Sultan. At the same time, in accordance with the Ottoman Millet system, and in view of the fact that the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarian Exarchate were the only Orthodox Christian institutions recognized in the Ottoman society, the Macedonian Christian population had to realise its religious life within these two institutions. From the aspect of the Macedonian national liberation movement, this period represents a crystallization of the conditions on the Balkans, but also of

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[40] The newspaper was edited by Petko Rachov Slavejkov, one of the leaders of the Bulgarian National Revival Movement.

[41] Newspaper: *Македония* (*Macedonia*), 23. VI 1870, quoted from: Б. Конески, *Кон македонската преродба. Македонските учебници од 19 век* (второ издание), ИНИ, Скопје, 1959 (B. Koneski, *For the Macedonian Revival Movement. Macedonian Textbooks from the 19th Century* (second edition), Institute of National History, Skopje, 1959), p. 40-41.

In fact, this Article provided the possibility for a free declaration or a referendum of all Slavic population within the Ottoman Empire (including the Serbs), who did not have their own church and were within the Patriarchate, to be able to decide on joining the newly established religious institution – the Exarchate. Compare the part from Article 10 which states the following: "*If all or at least two thirds of the Orthodox inhabitants of places other than those listed and pointed out above, wish to be subjugated to the Bulgarian Exarchate as regards their spiritual matters and if that has been determined, they will be allowed to; but that shall take place only at the request of and with the consent of all or at least two thirds of the inhabitants. Those who would use that as the means to create disagreement and discord among the population shall be persecuted and punished according to the law.*" *Документи и материали за историята на българския народ*. БАН, Софи®, 1969 (*Documents and Materials on the History of the Bulgarian People*. Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, 1969), p. 162–164.

[42] Slavonic name of today's town of Salonica in Greece.

the conceptions and forms in which it was to continue to develop and act.

Starting from Hroch's analysis of the structural phases within national movements, we believe that elements of phase A can already be distinguished in Partenij Zografski's philological concepts which also determine the line of development with later Macedonian activists in the fields of culture and education (the choice of western Macedonian dialects as the basis for the language standard).[43] In that regard, considering Hroch's theory with respect to the Bulgarian national movement, Raymond Detrez explains the terms 'oppressed nation', used by Hroch throughout his *Social Preconditions in national revival in Europe*, and 'non-dominant ethnic group', used in *In the national interest[44]*. And in doing, so he concludes as follows: "In regard to the Balkans under Ottoman rule these terms seem rather problematic." He also states the following: "If the Bulgarian nationalists in the 19th century considered the Bulgarians to be oppressed as an ethnic or national community, in the sense that their survival as an ethno-cultural community with its own language and other cultural distinctive features was threatened, it was not by the Turks, but by the Greeks." Reflected on Macedonian soil, in various periods in the 19th century, the threat came from the Greek side as much as from the Bulgarian or the Serbian side.

Hence, in the Macedonian national movement, a clear-cut line between the various phases can prove to be difficult to determine and, to be more precise, there is a continuous interaction between the elements characteristic for those distinct phases.[45]

4. Affirmation of the Concept of Cultural and Political Autonomy of Macedonia (1878 – 1908)

4.1. Intensifying the Anti-Exarchate Reaction

Hence: "The next period in the development of the Macedonian language and nationalism was a one of periodicals, organizations, inflammatory literature and insurrections, rather then textbooks and compromises."[46]

With the creation of the Principality of Bulgaria, some Macedonian emigrants hoped, relying on the experiences of other revival-liberation movements on the Balkans, that they would find

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[43] More on this, see: Raymond Detrez, The Bulgarian National Movement in the Light of Miroslav Hroch's Analysis of National Revival in Europe, working paper from the workshop "The Cultivation of Culture" (Netherlands Institute, Athens, 7-10 February 2004). (http://cf.hum.uva.nl/natlearn/balkan/athens_detrez.html).

[44] M. Hroch, *In the National Interest*, Charles University, Prague 1996.

[45] Тоа значи дека агитацијата е особено присутна уште во зачетокот фазата А, за која слободно можеме да кажеме дека континуирано опстојува и завлегува и во фазата С.

[46] V. Friedman, *Modern Macedonian Standard Language and its Relation to the Modern Macedonian Identity*, in: Victor Roudometof (ed.), *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics*, 2000, East European Monographs Boulder, Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York, 2000, pp. 173-201 (p. 184).

assistance for the Macedonian national propaganda there, but their activities were thwarted. A new social-economic and political life of a society that had a continuing growth started in the autonomous Principality.[47] It was a new environment, different from the Ottoman feudal and theocratic content up until then. The Principality started to develop as a civic and a strictly institutionalised centralised state. That state, Gellner establishes, identifies itself with, manages, and maintains a certain type of culture, a certain type of communication dominant within its borders, and its continuing renewal depends on the centralised educational system that is monitored and often in effect governed by that same state which has a monopoly over the lawful culture. The appearance of the Bulgarian national state put the Bulgarian Exarchate before the necessity of changing its role up until then.[48] Namely, in accordance with the policy of secularisation carried out by the state, it meant separating the political community from the religious ideology and the religious structure. At that particular time, the Bulgarian Exarchate, being the national Bulgarian church, was given the role of a key instrument in the realisation of foreign affair interests of the Principality, especially in the context of the Ottoman State. This determination also had specific legal grounds in Article 39 of the Trnovo Constitution, voted for at the Constitutional Assembly (1879), that is to say that: *"The Principality of Bulgaria, as regards the church, is an inseparable part of the Bulgarian religious region under the authority of the Holy Synod – the highest spiritual authority within the Bulgarian church, wherever it may be..."*.[49]

In the post-Berlin period, in order to organise the activity in theocratic Ottoman Macedonia, the Exarch was supposed to get sultan's decrees for appointing eparchy bishops, having in mind that in the course of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877, the Ottoman authorities had removed

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[47] Article 1 of the Berlin Agreement states the following: "Bulgaria is established as a self-governing principality that shall pay taxes, under the main governance of H. I. M. (His Imperial Majesty – our note) the Sultan, it shall have Christian government and police." *Сборник договоров России с другими государствами. 1856-1917* (*Collection of Agreements Made by Russia with Other Countries*) Гос.изд-во полит. литературы, Москва, 1952 (State publishing house for publishing political literature, Moskow, 1952), p. 182. The same in: *Македонија во меѓународните договори 1875-1919*, избор, редакција и коментар А. Христов, Ј. Донев, Архив на Македонија, Матица македонска, Скопје, 1994 (*Macedonia in International Agreements 1875-1919*, selection, redaction and commentary by A. Hristov, J Donev, Archives of Macedonia, Matica Makedonska, Skopje, 1994), p. 72.

[48] Regarding this Ernest Gellner says that in the industrial world, the high cultures are what is predominant, but they do not need a church, they need a state (Е. Гелнер, *Нациите и национализмот*, Култура, Скопје, 2001 (Macedonian translation from: E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1983), p. 37-44, 106.

[49] *Освобождение Болгарии от турецкого ига. Документы*, т. III, Москва, 1967, док. 104 (*Liberation of Bulgaria from the Turkish Rule. Documents*, volume 3, Moscow, 1967, doc. 104), p. 190; *Български конституции и конституционни проекти,* София, 1990 (*Bulgarian Constitutions and Constitutional Projects*, Sofia, 1990), p. 24.

the Exarchate bishops from there.[50] Running across difficulties regarding this issue at that particular time,[51] the Exarch felt that "*opening folk schools would be better*" and "*in doing so achieve the desired goal, while waiting for the deployment of archpriests*".[52] But, in both cases the road to renewing the church-Exarchate administration in Macedonia led to the church-educational municipalities. The Exarchate knowledgeably used their economic decline and their need for material aid. The said church-educational communities, named as Bulgarian and created even before the Russo-Turkish war, did not run across legal opposition by the Ottoman authorities, although their existence was not officially recognized. This was due to the fact that in the traditional agricultural society as was the Ottoman, the authorities were first and foremost interested in land ownership, collecting taxes and maintaining peace. The Ottoman authorities were tolerant, and even completely indifferent to the various faiths and cultures it ruled over or, as Gellner establishes, did not yearn for the souls of its subjects.[53]

In Macedonia, there was an active attitude that started early – a reaction to the culture spread via the Exarchate. This process of reaction actuated the principle for decentralisation within the educational, municipal and church governing. The need for autonomy, for acting on one's own and self-financing in the area of education can also be detected in 1882 in the Exarchate high school in Solun, as well as in the determinations of the Ohrid cultural-educational association "St. Clement" (1885) and its associated "*secret revolutionary circle*" (1886).[54] The case of the Prilep municipality was also characteristic (1886-1887), which had long managed to maintain its autonomy as far as

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[50] According to the provisions of the decree of 1870, the Exarchate had the right to three Eparchies in Macedonia (the Veles Eparchy, the Ohrid Eparchy and the Skopje Eparchy). But the Exarch aspired to ten more eparchies in Macedonia and two in Thrace. See: Български екзарх Йосиф I, *Дневник,* София, 1992 (Bulgarian Exarch Joseph I, *Diary*, Sofia, 1992), p. 116.

[51] After the Congress of Berlin (1878), the Sublime Porte tried to question the validity of the decree and transfer the seat of the Exarchate to Plovdiv or to Sofia, considering that a Bulgarian state had been established. See: М. Арнаудов, *Екзарх Йосиф и българската културна борба след създаването на Екзархията (1870 - 1915)*, т. I, София, 1940 (M. Arnaudov, *Exarch Joseph and the Bulgarian Cultural Struggle after the Creation of the Exarchate (1870 - 1915)*, volume 1, Sofia, 1940), p. 369.

[52] *Егзарх български Йосиф I, Писма и доклади* (ред. В. Георгиев, Ст. Трифонов), София, 1994 (*Bulgarian Exarch Joseph I, Letters and Articles* (ed. by V. Georgiev, S. Trifonov), Sofia, 1994), p. 24.

[53] Е. Гелнер, *Нациите и национализмот* (E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*), p. 67.

[54] "*Schools should be opened in every village* (in the Ohrid region – our note)*; the teachers and the priests are not to be replaceable; if possible, every village should support its own school*." More on this, see: А. Кецкаровъ, Предтечи на Революционата организация въ Охридско (A. Keckarov, Precursors of the Revolutionary Organization in the Ohrid Region), in: *Илюстрация Илинденъ*, VIII/1 (71), София, 1936 (*Ilinden Illustrations*, VIII/1 (71), Sofia, 1936), p. 12; Автобиографически бележки изъ живота на Н. Пасховъ (Autobiographical Notes from the Life of N. Pashov), in: *Илюстрация Илинденъ*, V/9 - 10 (49-50), София, 1933 (*Ilinden Illustrations*, V/9 - 10 (49-50), Sofia, 1933), p. 31.

the school matters are concerned, regulating them with their Statute "*in line with the local conditions*".[55]

Close to this position was the decision made by the church-educational municipality in Kostur[56] (1892-1893),[57] as well as that of a group of teachers in Voden (1892), in Prilep, etc.

The practice of centralising the work of municipalities resulted in discontent and in defending the independence of municipalities by the Macedonian citizenry. This reaction was present within almost every single municipality and the area close to it. The need for respecting the specific characteristics in Macedonia and the democratic principle which was affected by the joint fight for a single church[58] appeared again with all its severity. Thus, as far back as 1882 the issue of a single municipal constitution that would provide guidance for the municipalities of the Macedonian citizenry in the field of general work and specify their relation to the Exarchate, was opened.[59] The latter, interpreting this issue as being a self-initiative as opposed to its persistence for an immediate and constant control over the municipalities, did not withdraw from the principle of centralisation, that is to say from the position that their interests would be successfully protected "*only via direct contacts*" with it.[60]

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[55] А. Трајановски, Просветната дејност на Прилепската црковно- училишна општина во времето кога нејзин член бил Марко Цепенков (A. Trajanovski, The Educational Activity of the Prilep Church-School Municipality at the Time When Marko Cepenkov was Its Member), in: *Историја,* XVI/1, Скопје, 1980 (Journal of History, XVI/1, Skopje, 1980, p. 140-152 (p. 144).

[56] Today's Kastoria, a town in northern Greece.

[57] *Документи за борбата на македонскиот народ за самостојност и за национална држава. Од населувањето на Словените во Македонија до крајот на Првата светска војна, том први, Универзитет „Св. Кирил и Методиј"*, Скопје, 1981, док. 214 (*Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Its Independence and for a National State. From the Settling of the Slavs in Macedonia Until the End of the First World War*, volume one, University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius", Skopje, 1981, doc. 214), p. 303; Collection: *Школството, просветата и културата во Македонија во времето на преродбата*, МАНУ, Скопје, 1979 (*The School System, Education and Culture in Macedonia at the Time of the Revival Movement*, Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Skopje, 1979).

[58] *Еден глас за всичка Македония* (*One Voice for Whole of Macedonia*), in *Македония*, г. IV, Цареград, 23.6.1870 (*Macedonia*, year IV, Tsarigrad, 23rd June 1870). Quoted from: Б. Конески, *Кон македонската преродба* (B. Koneski, *For the Macedonian Revival Movement*), p. 40 - 41.

[59] Д. Ризов, Битоля, Средства за развитието на българщината в Македония (D. Rizov, Bitola, Means for the Development of Bulgarian National Feeling in Macedonia), in: в. *Марица*, V, N° 381, 27. IV. 1882, Великден (newspaper *Marica*, V, N° 381, 27th April 1882, Easter), p. 5; Ив. Снегаров, *Солун в Блгарската духовна култура. Исторически очерк и документи*, София, 1937 (I. Snegarov, Salonica in the Bulgarian Spiritual Culture. Historical Overview and Documents, Sofia, 1937), p. 169.

[60] Н. Котлар-Трајкова, Антиегзархиската борба како афирмација на македонскиот идентитет (1878-1893) (N. Kotlar-Trajkova, Anti-Exarchate Stuggle as an Affirmation of the Macedonian Identity (1878-1893)), *меѓународен научен собир „Македонскиот идентитет низ историјата"*, Институт за национална историја, Скопје, 2010 *(International scientific conference*

A characteristic example of resisting this kind of practise was the initiative (1886, 1887) of most of the citizens of Prilep, led by the local priest Spase Igumenov, for establishing a new municipality of Prilep where the people would be "*educated in the social life, humanism, giving its spirit a positive enthusiasm*"[61] and which would be called "Macedonian Orthodox Society"[62], as opposed to the administration of the "Bulgarian C(hurch) Municipality"[63] at the time. Also, there were similar examples of reactions and non-acceptance in Veles, Shtip,[64] Ohrid,[65] etc.

The issue of what was going on in Macedonia, accompanied by the ideas about the language and its orthography, was of topical interest among the Macedonian emigration within the Principality, that is to say in the activities of several societies and individuals, in periodicals, etc. In that regard, we would like to mention The Secret Macedonian Committee (1885), Spiro Gulapchev (1887), Gjorgjija Pulevski (1888), Georgi Krapchev (1889/1890), the newspaper *Macedonia* (1888–1893) owned by Kosta Shahov, The Young Macedonian Literary Society and its magazine *Loza* (1892), and others. The self-educated G. Pulevski from Galichnik expresses most specifically the awareness of a Macedonian patriot even during 1870s; he speaks about the history of his people, about the need for creating a grammar of the Macedonian language by getting together learned men who know the mother tongue well. As far as the issue of the literary language is concerned, G. Pulevski presents it as being a national issue.[66]

On the other hand, in 1886 the members of The Secret Macedonian Committee[67] turned to the Serbian Government with a plea for it to help them with their activities in eliminating the Bulgarian

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"Macedonian Identity throughout the History", Institute of National History, Skopje, 2010), pp. 177-189.

[61] Вардарски, *Стамболовщината въ Македония и нейните представители,* Виена, 1894 (Vardarski, *Stambolov Regime in Macedonia and Its Representatives*, Viena 1894), p. 46.

[62] Кл. Џамбазовски, *Граѓа за историјата на македонскиот народ од Архивот на Србија*, т. IV, кн. II, Београд, 1986, док. 132 (K. Dzambazovski, *Materials on the History of the Macedonian People from the Archives of Serbia*, volume 4, book 2, Beograd, 1986, doc. 132), p. 269-273.

[63] Кл. Џамбазовски, *Граѓа за историјата на македонскиот народ од Архивот на Србија*, т. V, кн. I, Београд, 1988, док. 70 (K. Dzambazovski, *Materials on the History of the Macedonian People from the Archives of Serbia*, volume 5, book 1, Beograd, 1988, doc. 70), p. 175.

[64] Вардарски, *Стамболовщината въ Македония и нейните представители, Виена 1894* (Vardarski, *Stambolov Regime in Macedonia and Its Representatives*, Vienna 1894), p. 32.

[65] А. Кецкаровъ, Предтечи на Революционата организация въ Охридско (A Keckarov, Precursors of the Revolutionary Organization in the Ohrid Region), in: *Илюстрация Илинденъ*, VIII/1 (71), София, 1936 (Ilinden Illustrations, VIII/1 (71), Sofia, 1936), p. 12.

[66] More on this, see: Билјана Ристовска-Јосифовска, Ѓорѓија М. Пулевски, револуционер и културно-национален деец, Селектор, Скопје, 2008 (Biljana Ristovska-Josifovska, Gjorgia M. Pulevski, a Revolutionary and a Cultural and National Activist, Selektor, Skopje, 2008).

[67] They are: Temko Popov, Naum Evro, Kosta Grupche and Vasil Karajovov.

propaganda in Macedonia. In the Interim Programme, written by one of its most prominent members Temko Popov, four requests were presented.[68] He promoted the basis for these activities, which was as follows: "*The main task is to make Macedonia Macedonian*", as well as: to open Macedonian schools in this dialect and to compile the grammar and other necessary textbooks... Macedonian textbooks.[69] Popov is also the author of the political bookle *Who is to Blame* in 1889, written in Macedonian language, which "*impresses with its language and style, with the consistence in applying certain graphemic, orthographic issues, as well as other general language issues*".[70] This bookle was, in fact, the realisation of the second item from the programme, but it remained as a manuscript.[71] In it, he presented the true situation in Macedonia after the establishment of the Exarchate.[72]

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[68] The Interim Programme contains the following items: 1. As soon as the academic 1887/1888, 12 teachers who will teach in Macedonian language are to be appointed in the cities throughout Macedonia, preferably in their native cities; 2. A brochure is to be published in Macedonia in which the political situation in Macedonia after the establishment of the Exarchate will be presented together with the request that the Ohrid Archbishopric be renewed as well as the Macedonian national church; 3. A Macedonian reading room is to be opened in Solun that will later turn into a central association with branches in the more important places around Macedonia; 4. To get the Ottoman government in Tsarigrad to approve the publishing of a newspaper in Macedonian language (Т. Стаматоски, Поглед на јазикот на статијата 'Кој е крив' на Темко Попов (T. Stamatoski, A View on the Language in the Article 'Who is to Blame' by Temko Popov), in: *Борба за македонски литературен јазик*, Мисла, Скопје, 1986 (*Struggle for Macedonian Literary Language*, Misla, Skopje, 1986), pp. 94-102 (p. 94-95).

[69] Temko Popov to Despot Badžović, 9th May 1888, *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and Nation-state,* volume 1, The University of "Ss. Cyril and Methodius", Skopje, 1981, doc. 198, p. 303-304.

[70] Т. Стаматоски, Поглед на јазикот на статијата „Кој е крив" на Темко Попов (T. Stamatoski, A View on the Language in the Article 'Who is to Blame' by Temko Popov), p. 97.

[71] The Programme of the Secret Macedonian Committee was not realised because the interests of the Serbian government were in an obvious collision with the requests of the said Macedonian intellectuals.

[72] Popov begins his article with the words: "*It has been more than ten years since we Macedonians have had any spiritual leadership in our places, because of which our Church and school activities suffer the most.*" Continuing his analysis, he says: "*It appears to me that the cause for this spiritual void is..., the Exarchate and the Exarchate Graces.*" He also submits the Macedonian citizens to his criticism: "*That Exarchate, and those graces of its, have made us become parasites. Those teachers, who were sent to us as gifts, and those schools, that are supported by it, have made these intellectual thickheads in our homeland.*" At the end he also gives the specific solutions for settling this situation with the conclusion: "*This is the way in which, in my opinion, we could: first, have our own bishops and organised schools quite soon without us needing other people's mercy, because woe to the people that waits for its spiritual food to be given to it by another's hand and that has entrusted it to such people; and second, by resolving this thorny church issue in question, we will gain trust in the rightfulness, will put an end to the intrigues both internal and external, and thus live so peacefully under the father's wing, His Emperor Highness our Lord Sultan Abdul Hamid II*" (Т. Попов, Кој је крив (T. Popov, Who is to Blame),

Analysing the intent behind the way the Exarchate conducted its activities, Petar Pop Arsov, one of the founders of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, in 1894 determined that: *"our kind Exarchate... aspires to take away the noble field of our municipal activities via its authority, wants to numb them, kill them".*[73] The actuality of this issue increased more and more from one year to the next in view of the consequences in the municipal (non)operation because of this type of Exarchate conception. Summarising the effect from the educational practise of the Exarchate in Macedonia, Pop Arsov concludes: *"...in a word, the schools as they are currently set up, do not take into consideration the interests of that country for which they seemingly exist... And Macedonians have a specific need for a more sublime intellectual-moral enthusiasm and, instead of aiding it, our 'good-intentioned individuals' look for any type of means to hinder it, doubting even at present that it is about some kind of separatism."*[74]

An important segment in this area was the endeavour made by the scientific-literary society that was active in this period in Sofia, and that is the Macedonian Literary Youth Association that has its own press organ, namely the magazine *Loza*[75]. Although they do not explicitly express any separatist tendencies, their first issue, which was published in February of 1892, was already under strong criticism by the pro-government newspaper *Svoboda*. Separatist expressions were, amongst other things, recognised in the attempt made by "lozari (movement)" to establish their own language standard[76] in which the rules of the official Bulgarian orthography were intentionally ignored by introducing a more phonetic orthography and Macedonian characteristics.[77] Restricting the

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in: Т. Стаматоски, *Борба за македонски литературен јазик* (T. Stamatoski, *Struggle for Macedonian Literary Language*, pp. 225-241 (p. 225, 234, 241).

[73] Futher on in the brochure, Petar Pop Arsov wrote: "*... our lords for many centuries have never touched our municipal self-government, even under the Greek bishops the people within the municipalities were free to think about supporting and organising the schools, churches, monasteries and other national-social issues.*" See: Вардарски, *Стамболовщината въ Македония и нейните представители* (Vardarski, *Stambolov Regime in Macedonia and Its Representatives*), p. 42-46.

[74] Ibid., p. 14-42.

[75] A number of prominent Macedonian intellectuals, publishers, writers, etc., who later developed their activities and showed ideological inconsistencies, were members of the association, among them are: Kosta Shahov (chairman), Georgi Balsachev, Evtim Sprostranov, and others, as well as the future founders of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization: Ivan Hadzi Nikolov, Dame Gruev and Petar Pop Arsov.

[76] Т. Стаматоски, Обидот на „Лоза" да гради македонски јазичен стандард (T. Stamatoski, The Attempt of "Loza" to Build the Macedonian Language Standard), in: Т. Стаматоски, *Континуитет на македонскиот јазик*, Просветно дело, Скопје, 1998 (T. Stamatoski, *Continuity of the Macedonian Language*, Prosvetno delo, Skopje, 1998), pp. 67-84.

[77] As a result, in the middle of 1892 the society breaks apart, and the magazine *Loza* ceases to be published. But since it had had a strong social influence, the Bulgarian official politics had an interest in renewing it in May 1894, only this time with a different editorial office, a new editorial policy and using the official Bulgarian orthography. But the renewed magazine did not remain for long because it did not fulfil the requests that were expected of it. For this, see:

social life of the Macedonian people in the Ottoman state, which was already at its minimum, was the motive to look for another alternative in the religious sphere.

For the Macedonian citizenry, the way out of the labyrinth of the "*social paralysis*" (according to T. Popov) was in organising a separate church life from the Exarchate, either under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate or under the patronage of the Roman-Catholic Church (Union) via the act of renewing the Ohrid Archbishopric.[78] This idea was of topical interest in Macedonia in the early 1880s[79] as well, having in mind the ideas and the disposition of the leading people accredited with organising the Exarchate school infrastructure in Solun – the teachers Kuzman Shapkarev and Janaki Strezov (from Ohrid) and Bishop Metodija Kusevich (from Prilep). What followed several years later (1887) was *The Statement* by Priest Spase Igumenov with his followers from Prilep on non-recognising the Bulgarian Exarchate and choosing the religious protection by "*the Pope, but without changing the dogmas of the Orthodox church*".[80] At almost the same time, the Bulgarian newspaper *Plovdiv*, wrote about "*harsh complaints from various cities in Macedonia which at present want to renounce the Exarchate and establish a special spiritual Administration*".[81]

The discontent from the many years of Exarchate (non)spiritual activities in Macedonia was particularly present at the time immediately before the issue of the two sultan's decrees for Exarchate bishops in Macedonia. That is why the publicly proclaimed idea of the Exarchate Metropolitan Teodosij who had just arrived to Skopje (30 July, 1890) about a spiritual unification of the Macedonian people "*under the wing*

Блаже Ристовски, „Лозарите" во развитокот на македонската национална мисла (Blaze Ristovski, The "Lozar" People in the Development of the Macedonian National Thought), in: Блаже Ристовски, *Македонскиот народ и македонската нација,* I, Мисла, Скопје, 1983 (Blaze Ristovski, *The Macedonian People and Macedonian Nation*, 1, Misla, Skopje, 1983), pp. 469-510.

[78] The Ohrid Archbishopric was abolished in 1767 by a Sultan's edict, and under the influence of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

[79] This means renewing the idea for a union that was also present before, and which has already been discussed earlier in this article.

[80] М. Миноски, Два документа за акцијата на прилепчани од 1887 година за македонското народно училиште и самостојна црква (M. Minoski, Two Documents on the Action of the People of Prilep in 1887 for the Macedonian School and an Independent Church), in: *Историја*, XIX/2, Скопје, 1983 (Journal of History, XIX/2, Skopje, 1983), p. 325-330 (p. 329-330); Кл. Џамбазовски, *Граѓа за историјата на македонскиот народ од Архивот на Србија*, т. V, кн. I, док. 70 (K. Dzambazovski, *Materials on the History of the Macedonian People from the Archives of Serbia*, volume 5, book 1, doc. 70), p. 175.

[81] Државен архив на Република Македонија, фонд: *Министарство иностраних дела Краљевине Србије*, мф. 439, коресподенција: том 1, ф. IV, 1887 (State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia, fonds: *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Serbia*, mf. 439, correspondence: volume 1, fond 4, 1887); *Документи за борбата на македонскиот народ*, т. I, док. 203 (*Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People*, volume 1, doc. 203), p. 287.

of the Ohrid Archbishopric, its true mother church"[82] had such a strong resounding effect and meant removing the foundation that was held firmly by the Exarchate and the Patriarchate for the spiritual (*cultural*) winning over of the Macedonian people.[83] The activities undertaken by the Skopje Metropolitan Teodosij for an independent, Macedonian church-educational life was not an accidental outburst. It was yet another link in the chain called a tradition for one's own church organization, municipal self-government, appropriate education in the Macedonian folk language and domeic intelligence. The contemporary of these events Gjorche Petrov, one of the ideologists of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, in his *Memories*, remembers as follows: "*I interpret the said movement that lasted for several years as simply a reaction against many years of Exarchate aspiring to focus the directing of the social life in its own hands, and I also consider it to be the first step towards acting on one's own in the country... It imperceptibly turned into a revolutionary movement*"[84], that is to say into the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization.

In the period after the Russo-Turkish war, the management of the Greek propaganda was taken over by the Greek Consulates in Macedonia, in the background of which the Patriarchate continues to carry out its actions, that is to say its metropolitans. This propaganda gains its strongest momentum in the Bitola vilayet in the period of 1878 – 1893, when just in Bitola itself there were separate complete male and female high schools opened, a seminary, as well as several elementary schools and preschools. After 1903, the Greek church-educational propaganda in Macedonia acquires the support of paramilitary Andartes units which, by use of radical measures, persisted in their attempts to "get back" the Macedonian Christian population under the spiritual authorities of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

As regards the activities of the Serbian propaganda after the Congress of Berlin, what is characteristic is that besides the opening of new Serbian schools, the Ottoman authorities were petitioned for authorization to print Serbian textbooks and for assigning teachers in Macedonia, and the Patriarchate of Constantinople was petitioned for approving Serbian bishops to hold services in a number of Macedonian cities (Skopje, Veles, Debar, Bitola, Ohrid, etc.). After 1903, this propaganda too became more radical by financing and sending paramilitary units on the territory of Macedonia. As a result, there were military conflicts between the paramilitary units inserted by the

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[82] Сл. Димевски, *Митрополитот скопски Теодосиј - живот и дејност (1846 - 1926)*, Скопје, 1965 (S. Dimevski, *Metropolitan Teodosij of Skopje –* Life and Activities (1846 – 1926), Skopje, 1965); *Документи за борбата на македонскиот народ*, т. I, док. 204, 289; док. 206 (*Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People*, volume 1, doc. 204, p. 289; doc. 206), p. 294.

[83] Сл. Димевски, Еден значаен документ за активноста на Теодосиј Гологанов (S. Dimevski, A Significant Document on the Activities of Teodosij Gologanov), in: *Гласник*, ИНИ, IX/2, Скопје, 1965 (*Review*, Institute of National History, IX/2, Skopje, 1965), p. 159-182 (p. 181).

[84] *Спомени на Гьорчо Петровъ (Съобщава Л. Милетичъ),* София, 1927 (*Memories of Gjorche Petrov (Compiled by L. Miletich)*, Sofia, 1927), p. 11-12.

competitive propagandas, which added to the complexity of the situation in Macedonia.

The ideas for a cultural-educational and church autonomy within the Ottoman Empire[85] were crystallized in the period that followed into a movement for national separatism. The main pillars of these currents were the students and the young intellectuals who acted while in emigration, i.e. the so called "Macedonian colony" in Sankt Peterburg, led by Krste Misirkov and Dimitrija Chupovski. On 28th October 1902, it established the Macedonian Students' Society, which was renamed into Macedonian Scientific-Literary Society "St. Clement" the following year, the most important Macedonian national institution in Russia.[86] Towards the end of the said 1903, K. Misirkov's book *On Macedonian Matters*[87] was published in Sofia. Analysing the current situation, he explicitly says: *"I am a Macedonian and the interests of my homeland present to me as thus: not Russia and Austria-Hungary, but Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia are the enemies of Macedonia. Only an energetic fight with those three states shall deliver our homeland from execution. The fight between the three Balkan states is not in opposition to our interests which could be attained by both revolution and evolution, or a gradual development of our people in a moral-religious direction."*[88] With this, he in fact points out to the two tendencies within the national movement: the revolutionary and the evolutionary tendency.[89] As an advocate for the latter group, he highlights the importance of the fight against the propagandas with the call: *"It is time to discard the nets from our eyes, placed on them by the national and religious propagandas in Macedonia"*.[90] Explaining further his position, Misirkov says the following: *"The cultural work is more natural than the revolutionary one, because with the former the intelligence seems to be the true servant of its people, and with the revolution it turns into a merciless experimenter. After all, the cultural work is sensible. With it the*

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[85] Manifested mainly via the activities of the said Secret Macedonian Committee and presented as a programme in the treatise by T. Popov.

[86] One of the first activities of this society was the Memorandum sent to the Russian government and to the Slavic Beneficial Society of Sankt Petersburg in which the issue of raising the Macedonian language to the level of a literary language for all Macedonians was discussed in great detail, then the issue of renewing the Ohrid Archbishopric as the Macedonian national church, as well as the recognition of Macedonians as being a distinct Slavic entity, all with the aim to acquire a full autonomy within the Empire. The same issues discussed in this document were discussed in detail by Misirkov in his book, as he himself mentions in the foreword. See: Крсте П. Мисирков, *Одбрани страници*, приредил Блаже Ристовски, Мисла, Скопје, 1991 (Krste P. Misirkov, *Selected Pages*, compiled by Blaze Ristovski, Misla, Skopje, 1991), p. 16, 17.

[87] Due to its Macedonian subject matter, the whole print run of the book was immediately burnt, and only a few copies remained.

[88] Крсте П. Мисирков, *За македонцките работи* (Krste P. Misirkov, *On Macedonian Matters*), in: *Одбрани страници* (*Selected Pages*), pp. 47-225 (p. 49, 50-51).

[89] In this foreword he writes: *"The national ideals, or the duty to the homeland, are understood differently by different parts of the nation."* (Ibid., p. 47–48).

[90] Ibid., p. 52.

intelligence clarifies the most important issues in connection with the national self-awareness."[91]

4.2. The formation of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO)

In the Macedonian historical corpus of significant events and processes, MRO holds a special place. It represents a higher stage in the development of the national liberation fight of the Macedonian people from the end of the 19th century. Its appearance in the said period was a logical consequence of the specific social-economic and geopolitical conditions within the Ottoman state.[92] It represents a state within a state, as it is sometimes characterised, a factor that represents one whole stage in the Macedonian historical development, and a very important one at that. With MRO, the process of organising the liberation activities of a "*purely internal Macedonian character*" began.[93] Its key determinants

[91] Ibid, p. 107. Misirkov also follows the work of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, and what he holds against it is its focus on the political liberation for which it did not have a wider foreign support either, as he analyses. As a contemporary and an advocate for the evolutionary idea, as well as not having the necessary historical distance, his views of the circumstances is harsh at certain times. He also critizes the use of the Bulgarian language in its communication and socio-political comments. On the other hand, Kocho Racin, the founder of modern Macedonian poetry, publisher and participant in the anti-fascism movement, on the eve of World War II (1940) and viewed from a historical distance, writes the following: "*The first I.M.R.O. (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization* – our note*) was created by several awakened Macedonians, but it starts being a mass organization from 1896. Dame Gruev was at its head at the time. That organization, as a true revolutionary organization, was clear about what it wanted and how it would obtain it: a mass organised revolutionary action and Macedonia itself led by Macedonians. Because for those organising the I.M.R.O. it was clear that it was the only way to win the freedom of Macedonia.*" Кочо Солев Рацин, *Значението на Илинден*, in: *Избрани дела, Проза и публицистика,* Избор, редакција и предговор Васил Тоциновски, Наша книга, Скопје, 1987 (Kocho Solev Racin, *The Significance of Ilinden*, in: *Selected Works*, *Prose and Socio-Political Comment*, selection, redaction and foreword by Vasil Tocinovski, Nasha Kniga, Skopje, 1987), pp. 170-172 (p. 170).

[92] The crises of the state-legal system and the aggressive propaganda of the neighbouring countries in the cultural-social life of the Macedonians "updated" the appearance of the organised Macedonian revolutionary movement. It contained the experiences from the previous liberation endeavours of the Macedonian people – the Razlovec Uprising in 1886 and the Macedonian (Kresna) Uprising in 1878, and especially the experiences from the anti-Patriarchate and anti-Exarchate struggle. See: Д. Димески, *Македонското националноослободително движење во Битолскиот вилает (1893-1903)*, Скопје, 1982 (D. Dimeski, *Macedonian National Liberation Movement in the Bitola Vilayet (1893-1903)*, Skopje, 1982), p. 475-477.

[93] П. п. Арсовъ, Произходъ на революционното движение въ Македония и първит' стъпки на солунския „Комитетъ за придобиване на политическит' права на Македония, дадени и отъ Берлинския договоръ" (P. P. Arsov, Rezult of the Revolutionary Movement in Macedonia and the First Steps of the Salonika "Committee for Acquiring Political Rights for Macedonia, Given Also with the Berlin Agreement"), in: *Бюлетинъ на вр'менното пр'дставителство на обединената бивша вътрешна Македонска*

were: maintaining the territorial integrity of Macedonia within the Ottoman state and the joint resistance of the people who was motivated by *"reasons deeper, more realistic and closer to its life and its position than some patriotic drawn illusions"*.[94] On the basis of this, Dame Gruev, Petar Pop Arsov, Ivan Hadzi Nikolov, Hristo Tatarchev, Hristo Batandziev and Andon Dimitrov, on October 23 (old style) 1893, in Solun set up the foundations for MRO[95], the most important subject in the liberation aspirations of the Macedonian people from 1893 to 1908.[96]

The founders were unanimous in that the Organization was to be secret and revolutionary, internal, independent in its activities and with the following political slogan: autonomy for Macedonia. The Central Committee[97] directed its activities first towards a small circle of people belonging to the intelligentsia, the teachers and the priests,[98] but also those belonging to the citizenry, as well as towards the students at the Solun high school. In the beginning, the discontent of the Macedonian population by the Exarchate centralised politics in the church-educational life, was taken as a mobilising action.

Summarising the results from the first year of the Organization being active, Ivan Hadzi Nikolov in his memories wrote the following: *"...it can generally be said that even in 1894 we had cores and circles in almost every city in Macedonia."*[99] The number of the new members

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революционна организация. N° 8, София, 1919 (*Newsletter of the Interim Assembly of the Former Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization*, No 8, Sofia, 1919), p. 3; *Спомени на Гьорчо Петровъ* (*Gjorche Petrov's Memoirs)*, p. 11-12.

[94] Ѓ. Петров, *Македонското ослободително дело*, редакција Г. Тодоровски, Матица македонска, Скопје, 1971 (G. Petrov, Macedonian Liberation Work, redaction by G. Todorovski, Matica Makedonska, Skopje, 1971), p. 107.

[95] More in: М. Миноски, Прилог кон прашањето за името на Македонската револуционерна организација во почетниот период на нејзиното дејствување (1893 - 1896) (M. Minoski, Contribution for the Name Issue of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization in the Starting Period of Its Activities (1893 – 1896)), in: *Прилози,* Одделение за општествени науки, XXVI 2, МАНУ, Скопје, 1996 (*Contributions*, Department of Social Sciences, XXVI 2, Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Skopje, 1996), p. 71-82.

[96] For the different aspects of the development and the activities of MRO, more in the bibliographical supplement by I. Anastasova and D. Simich, *Македонската историографија за Македонската револуционерна организација (ВМРО),* Институт за национална историја, Скопје, 1993 (*Macedonian Historiography on the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO)*, Institute of National History, Skopje, 1993); М. Пандевска, *Струмичкиот револуционерен округ (1893-1903),* кн. I, Скопје, 2002 (M. Pandevska, *Strumica Revolutionary Circle (1893-1903)*, book 1, Skopje, 2002), p. 359.

[97] The official name of the highest governing body of the Organization was: Macedonian Central Committee (MCC). See: М. Миноски, Прилог кон прашањето за името на Македонската револуционерна организација во почетниот период на нејзиното дејствување (1893 - 1896) (M. Minoski, Contribution for the Name Issue of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization in the Starting Period of Its Activities (1893 – 1896)), p. 77.

[98] They were all Exarchate pupils or in the service of the Exarchate.

[99] В. *Илюстрация Илинденъ,* кн. 2(72), г. VIII, София, 1936 (Newspaper *Ilinden Illustrations*, book 2(72), year VIII, Sofia, 1936), p. 6.

gradually increased, amongst whom were: Pere Toshev, Gjorche Petrov and Goce Delchev, for whom, even more than for some of the instigators, the epithet founders is befitting.[100] Goce Delchev immediately pointed out the need for organising the people in the Macedonian villages. He went a step further than the practise thus far for individual enlisting of men from the cities and constantly moved agitating for membership and organising the village people. With his immediate activities amid the villagers, new revolutionary centres quickly sprung up.[101]

Socialists contribute a specific ideological impulse to the Organization, and even enter its highest bodies. They were aware that at that particular time in history, the fight of the Macedonian revolutionaries was led under very different conditions, for which N. P. Rusinski wrote: "*The Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian revolutionaries operated under different circumstances and in different economic conditions*".[102] What it meant was an adaptation of the Macedonian revolutionary movement to the current conditions where the *"capital"* was the *"commander of world politics"*.[103] Hence, Macedonian revolutionaries had to mind the policy of *"every little state on the Balkans aspiring to European Turkey"* as regards Macedonia, but also the interests of the Great Powers as well.[104]

This largely included actuating the social moment. According to him, the task of the learned was to become teachers and leaders of the people who lived in the villages in *"starvation and misery"*, and in the cities the *"working class"*[105] led a life *"with no direction, a meaningless*

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[100] *"In fact, that every initiator was not a revolutionary as well, and had no idea about the character of the movement, can be seen in their later evolution. It was a time of a beginner's wandering. It appears that the movement was removed from them by Goce Delchev and the groups of people he organises, and then the socialists and other more radical currents."* М. Пандевски, МРО меѓу 1893-1918 – формирање и развиток (M. Pandevski, MRO between 1893-1918 – Its Establishment and Development), in: *Сто години од основањето на ВМРО и 90 години од Илинденското востание,* Македонска академија на науките и уметностите, Скопје, 1994 (*One Hundred Years since the Establishment of IMRO and 90 Years since Ilinden Uprising*, Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Skopje, 1994), pp. 21-43 (p. 23).

[101] This activity was also practised by his followers like Jane Sandanski, Nikola Petrov–Rusinski, Vele Markov, Mihail Gerchikov, Nikola Karev, Sava Mihajlov–Savata, and many others. See: М. Пандевска, *Струмичкиот револуционерен округ (1893-1903)*, кн. I (M. Pandevska, *Strumica Revolutionary Circle (1893-1903)*, book 1), p. 13.

[102] Н. Петров-Русински, *Спомени,* Предговор, редакција и коментар, Д. Пачемска и В. Кушевски, Институт за национална историја, Скопје, 1997 (N. Petrov-Rusinski, *Memories*, foreword, redaction and commentary by D. Pachemska and V. Kushevski, Institute of National History, Skopje, 1997), p. 152.

[103] Ibidem.

[104] Ibid., 153.

[105] Its number in Macedonia was estimated at about 30% of the total population. В. Поповски, *Македонското национално-ослободително движење до ТМОРО*, Скопје, 1989 (V. Popovski, *The Macedonian Revolutionary Liberation Movement to SMORO*, Skopje, 1989), p. 241-243.

life".[106] Close to his socialist determination, it meant: revolutionary changes in both social and political areas, fighting against the sultan's absolutism (monarchism) and the rigid social system.

Hence, the Secret Macedonian-Odrin Revolutionary Organization (SMORO)[107] is defined as a revolutionary movement with declared social responsibilities and liberation platform. At that particular time, it already presented as a revolutionary movement in the Ottoman state, with conceptualised ideas on political organising and acting, with its own programme, strategy and doctrine for the transfer of authorities. The internal structure of the movement was made up of subjects of various social-political and ideological inclinations, brought together under the liberation platform – against a non-functional system of the authorities, for the autonomy of Macedonia (having international-legal basis in Article 23 of the Berlin Agreement), and with a motto *"Macedonia to Macedonians!"*. This set up of the movement provided for the political fight to appear as a permanent characteristic in the social life of Macedonia, and it also gained in its numbers. The organizational set up was based on local and cross-border, i.e. legal and illegal, revolutionary organizations.[108]

The most important manifestation of its organised resistance was the Ilinden Uprising in 1903, which in spite of failing, left an important mark in the collective memory of the Macedonian people all the way to the present, as an act of higher most heroism as well as an inspiration in later fights the Macedonian people led for its liberation. Thus, the events and the people connected with the Ilinden period have been raised to a true cult.[109]

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[106] Н. Петров-Русински, *Спомени* (N. Petrov-Rusinski, *Memories)*, p. 156.

[107] In 1896, MRO is renamed into a Secret Macedonian-Odrin Revolutionary Organization (SMORO), and in 1905 it is known as the Internal Macedonian-Odrin Revolutionary Organization (IMORO), also known as Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO).

[108] The governing bodies of these organizations were named as committees, and the members of the illegal organizations as – *comitas*. The organization was the one that expressed its needs and aspirations. Hence, the units (regional, village, etc.), as parts of the armed formations of MRO, together with the committees had a duty to promote the national self-government.

[109] Kocho Racin, in the said article on the uprising, writes the following: *"Ilinden is the greatest date in the whole of the fight of the Macedonian people until now."* Кочо Солев Рацин, Значението на Илинден, in: *Избрани дела, Проза и публицистика* (Kocho Solev Racin, The Significance of Ilinden, in: *Selected Works, Prose and Socio-Political Comment)*, pp. 170-172 (p. 170). On another occasion, he says that in the national memory it is *"the uprising in which tens of thousands of people bled to death, in which our fathers, uncles, grandfathers participated, after which our mothers made their own revolutionary calendar: 'My child was born a year after the uprising', 'The wedding was a year before the uprising', 'The third year after the uprising the harvest was...' "*. (See: Кирил Миљовски, Со Кочо за македонскиот јазик, нација, историја, in: Кочо Солев Рацин. *Избрани дела, Секавања на современиците,* Избор, редакција и предговор Перо Коробар, Наша книга, Скопје, 1987 (Kiril Miljovski, With Kocho about the Macedonian Language, Nation, History, in: Kocho Solev Racin, *Selected Works, Memories of*

In that regard, and according to Hroch's typology of the national movements among the smaller European Nations, we can agree, in part, with the assumption that Macedonian national liberation movement belongs to the belated type and that, in our opinion, one could say that it is a combination of this type and the insurrectional type.[110]

5. New Transitional Directions of the Macedonian National Liberation Movement

After the Ilinden events, the Organization activities grew passive. Its network was broken as never before, most regions were left without their leading bodies, its hierarchical structure was seriously interrupted, and the discipline made unstable. An ideological division to a left and a right wing appeared. During 1904 and 1905, a few unsuccessful attempts to revive it were made. *"The irony of the history is that the authentic Macedonian revolutionary organization disappeared in the same city, the city of Solun* (1908 – our note) *where it was originally established fifteen years before that."*[111] In the cultural-educational plan, on the other hand, suitable conditions for carrying out activities were almost non existent in Macedonia because, as V. Friedman points out, "*during the years until the beginning of the World War One, living conditions in Macedonia ranged from difficult to nightmarish. Most intellectual activity was carried on outside the country, largely in St. Peterburg".*[112] The most important product of those activities was the national-political journal *Vardar*, prepared by Misirkov in 1905 in Odesa,[113] completely in Macedonian language.

We end our study with the year 1908, i.e. the Young Turk Revolution, because from this period onwards the conditions for carrying out activities for the Macedonian national liberation movement were completely changed. In that respect, after the Balkan wars, and especially after the World War I, the geographical-ethnical-social area

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Contemporaries, selection, redaction and foreword by Pero Korobar, Nasha Kniga, Skopje, 1987), pp. 147-155 (p. 150).

[110] M. Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*, p. 28; see also p. 194, Note 10. In that regard, Marija Pandevska states that "due to some of its particularities, the Macedonian national-liberation movement from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century possesses the characteristics of a *belated / slowed* movement." See: М. Пандевска, Транзициите во македонското националноослободително движење (1893-1908) низ теоријата на М. Хрох, *меѓународна научна конференција „Транзициите во историјата и културата"* (M. Pandevska, Transitions in the Macedonian National-Liberation Movement (1893-1908) through the Theory of M. Hroch, *International scientific conference "Transitions in History and Culture",* Institute of National History, Skopje, 2008), pp. 171-186 (p. 186).

[111] М. Пандевски, Програмски и статутарни документи на Внатрешната македонска револуционерна организација (1904-1908), Македонска академија на науките и уметностите, Скопје, 1998 (M. Pandevski, Programme and Statutory Documents of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (1904-1908)), Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Skopje, 1998), p. 32.

[112] V. Friedman, *Modern Macedonian Standard Language and its Relation to the Modern Macedonian Identity*, p. 187.

[113] The first issue of the magazine remained unpublished due to lack of financial means.

called Macedonia remained divided between the three Balkan states. The Macedonian population was included in the legal-political system of the different Balkan states, where it directly faced its being separate both from the aspect of the language and cultural non-recognition as well as from the aspect of a constant economic and social marginalisation. In spite of the fact that the movement was already fragmented and had no common management, it continues to develop applying different tactics of carrying out activities depending on the conditions within each of the Balkan states.

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MACEDONIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN THE 19TH CENTURY: DEVELOPMENT STAGES AND CONCEPTIONS

- abstract -

The subject of our paper is to make a general retrospect of the historical processes that determine the Macedonian national movement in the period of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. It includes presenting the conditions in the period up until 1878, as well as the events that took place after the Congress of Berlin, when new borders were drawn and new states appeared in the Balkans. Our goal is to present the specific characteristics of the Macedonian national movement which from the aspect of modern theories do not make it a theoretical exception, but rather that it can be treated as an exception that proves the rule.

In this regard, the key topics that are considered are those on the Macedonian Revival movement, and the cultural-educational, the language and the national progress of the Macedonian people in the said period. Also, there are the activities of the Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbian propaganda, the idea to form a Union with the Roman Catholic church, and the reaction of the Macedonian people to it.

The foundation of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization represents a higher stage in the development of the national liberation fight of the Macedonian people from the end of the 19th century. In regards to the activities on a cultural level, especially among the Macedonian emigration, the Organization promoted another concept for Macedonian autonomy – national VS political separatism.